

ON THE STREETS WHERE YOU LIVE



Two Bridges and Epping Road

The 2013 Heritage Festival theme was Community Milestones; one milestone in the Lane Cove Municipality was the building of Epping Road and the construction of bridges across the Lane Cove River and Stringybark Creek.

During the 19th century North Shore suburbs of Sydney were dependant on ferry services across the harbour and along the river for transport. The North Shore rail line opened in 1890 linking Hornsby to St Leonards and extended to Milsons Point in May 1893. The tramline from Crows Nest to Gore Hill commenced in 1900 and was extended along the Pacific Highway to Longueville Road, Lane Cove in 1909, but these still left large parts of the municipality not accessible to transport routes.

In the 1920s the NSW government was proposing a railway line which would link Eastwood with St. Leonards and assist in the development of post WWI Sydney. The route of the rail line was to be built along the approximate line of today's Epping Road and would allow for the development of the suburbs away from the foreshores of the river. In anticipation of this railway, residential land subdivisions were created from the orchards and dairies along the proposed route. By 1930, due to the economic circumstances and the Great Depression, the Premier revealed there was no money to pay for the rail link.

In 1936, Eric Sydney Spooner, MLA and Member for Ryde, announced that the rail link would never be built, but instead promised a 'first class concrete road'. In 1938-39 construction commenced on a new road from Moore Street, Lane Cove to the western side of the Lane Cove River. The new stretch of road included the construction of two bridges, one at Stringybark Creek and another to cross the Lane Cove River. When the road opened in 1940 the section between Moore Street and the Lane Cove River was named Epping Road. The road on the western side of the river towards Delhi Road was originally called the Spooner Highway.

As Epping Road ended at the then intersection of Moore Street and Centennial Avenue, access to Lane Cove shops and Longueville Road continued via Landers Road. From 1939 land was acquired along Canberra Street which eventually allowed for construction of a direct connection between Centennial Avenue and Longueville Road. Some houses in Canberra Street were knocked down, and in 1958 part of Canberra Street reopened as an extension of Epping Road.

Also in 1958 the tram service along the Pacific Highway to Longueville Road ceased, increasing the pressure for better local and regional road networks. By 1962 traffic lights were installed at the intersection of Epping and

Longueville Roads and after road widening in 1967 the North Ryde section of the Spooner Highway was renamed Epping Road. The Epping Road/Longueville Road corridor was linked to the Warringah Freeway with the opening of the Gore Hill Freeway in August 1992. This corridor continues to provide a major arterial route for northern Sydney.

By the 1970s units had been built on the northern side of Epping Road through Lane Cove and in 1972 azaleas were first planted along this section of the road and have since become a noted landmark for their colorful floral display every September.



Building Stringybark Creek Bridge, Epping Road, (Main Road 373), circa 1939.
(Courtesy of The State Library of New South Wales)

